

Hope Lodge,
Whitemarsh, Penna.

HABS No. PA -18

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings
PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Pennsylvania

HISTORICAL AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
Joseph P. Sims, District Officer
2008 Architects Building, Philadelphia, Penna.

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46-WHIM
2-

HABS PA - 18
Page 1

HOPE LODGE
On Bethlehem Pike
just north of its junction with Skippack Pike in
Whitemarsh, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Owner: Mr. William L. Degn.

Date of Erection: 1721 - 23

Architect: Unknown.

Builder: Unknown.

Present Condition: In original condition, except for hood over front door and rear part of kitchen wing, which are later additions.

Number of Stories: Two and a half-stories and basement.

Materials of Construction: The main building is brick fronted, the side and rear walls and kitchen wing of stone covered with stucco. The doors and windows are similar to other houses of the same period, having heavy mouldings, and being higher and narrower than those of a later period. A hall of unusual width runs the full depth of the house, and opens into spacious chambers on both sides. The chief rooms have round-arched doorways, flanked by pilasters with curiously designed caps. The stairway ascends laterally from the rear hall. Throughout the house the woodwork is heavy and substantial and many of the materials are said to have been brought from England. Back of the house and connected by a brick paved porch (with glass enclosure of later date) are the kitchen and servants' quarters.

Throughout the Main rooms of the first floor there is panelled wainscoting stopping at a chair rail with plastered walls and wood cornices above. In the Main first floor rooms the fireplace side is panelled to the ceiling, the shaped fireplace facings being of Pennsylvania Blue marble. Floors of wide random width boards. As no heating system has ever been installed in the Main rooms, the woodwork is in perfect original condition.

History: Built in 1721-23 by Samuel Morris, who, while in England collecting plans and, it is said unpinned panelling and hardware for the house, became engaged to an English lady. The story goes - that after the completion of the house he gave a house-warming at which the wine flowed too freely and he made the remark, "Now that I have the sty, all I need is the sow", - upon hearing which the English lady very properly broke the engagement, and Morris died a bachelor in 1770. By will he left the property to his brother, Joshua, by whom it was sold to William West, - the West Estate in turn selling it to Henry Hope, the banker who appears in "Anthony Adverse", and from whom it took its name. It later passed through the Watmough and Wentz families and finally in 1923 to the present owner, - Mr. Degn.

Hope Lodge was the headquarters of General Fitzgerald when Washington was quartered at Camp Hill after the Battle of Germantown, and there is a story that Washington rode through the hall of Hope Lodge on a bet. General Fitzgerald had orders (still in existence) to protect the place and cut timber on Christmas Day, 1777, just before the army moved to Valley Forge.

It was while Washington was at Camp Hill that Lydia Darrach took the news to him of a contemplated attack by the British on his encampment at Whitemarsh. The remains of Fort Washington are still in existence, just to the north of the Hope Lodge property, and the line of entrenchments is still visible.

Additional Data: Field Books and Drawings mailed December 21st, 1936, - HABS PA - 18 Drawings, 1 to 12.

Bibliography: Publications of the Montgomery County Historical Society
Byways & Boulevards around Philadelphia, -
Brandt & Gummere
The Colonial Homes of Philadelphia and
Its Neighborhood, -
Eberlein & Lippincott.

Signed

Joseph P. Sims

District Officer, H.A.B.S.

THW 8/27/37